

Claims

1. The use of inhibitors of acid sphingomyelinase and/or of inhibitors of products of the reaction catalyzed by this enzyme, in particular ceramide, for the prophylaxis and/or treatment of infectious diseases and/or diseases whose course is influenced by infections.
2. The use as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the inhibitors are antidepressants, in particular tricyclic and/or tetracyclic antidepressants.
3. The use as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the antidepressants are amitryptiline and/or imipramine.
4. The use as claimed in any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the inhibitors are substances derived from tricyclic and/or tetracyclic antidepressants, in particular from amitryptiline and/or imipramine.
5. The use as claimed in any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the inhibitors are desipramine and/or FGF (fibroblast growth factor) and/or substances derived therefrom.
6. The use as claimed in any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the inhibitors are antibodies, in particular neutralizing antibodies.
7. The use as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that the antibodies are directed against acid sphingomyelinase.
8. The use as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that the antibodies are directed against ceramide.

9. The use of substances which inhibit the formation of ceramide-rich membrane platforms for the prophylaxis and/or treatment of infectious diseases and/or diseases whose course is influenced by infections.  
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10. The use as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the substances are  $\beta$ -cyclodextrin, nystatin and/or filipin and/or substances derived therefrom.  
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11. The use as claimed in any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the infectious diseases are viral, bacterial, parasitic and/or mycological infectious diseases.  
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12. The use as claimed in any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the infectious diseases are Aids, hepatitis A, rhinoviral diseases, spring-summer meningoencephalitis (SSME), rubella, influenza, tuberculosis, meningococcal infections and/or malaria.  
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13. The use as claimed in any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the disease whose course is influenced by infections is cystic fibrosis.  
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14. The use as claimed in any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the infectious diseases are rinderpest and/or swine fever.  
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15. A pharmaceutical composition including an effective amount of at least one substance derived from tricyclic and/or tetracyclic antidepressants, in particular from amitryptiline and/or imipramine, and a pharmaceutical carrier.  
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16. A pharmaceutical composition including an

effective amount of desipramine, FGF,  $\beta$ -cyclodextrin, nystatin and/or filipin and/or at least one substance derived therefrom, and a pharmaceutical carrier.

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17. A pharmaceutical composition including an effective amount of at least one antibody directed against acid sphingomyelinase, in particular neutralizing antibody, and a pharmaceutical carrier.

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18. A pharmaceutical composition including an effective amount of at least one antibody directed against ceramide, in particular neutralizing antibody, and a pharmaceutical carrier.

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